

FIRST SERGEANT AND MASTER SERGEANT



WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THE FIRST SERGEANT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THE LIFE-BLOOD OF THE ARMY. THERE CAN BE NO SUBSTITUTE OF THIS POSITION NOR ANY QUESTION OF ITS IMPORTANCE. WHEN THEY ARE EXCEPTIONAL, THEIR UNITS ARE EXCEPTIONAL, REGARDLESS OF ANY OTHER SINGLE PERSONALITY INVOLVED. PERHAPS THEIR RANK INSIGNIA SHOULD BE THE KEYSTONE RATHER THAN THE TRADITIONAL ONE DEPICTED HERE. IT IS THE FIRST SERGEANT AT WHOM ALMOST ALL UNIT OPERATIONS MERGE. THE FIRST SERGEANT HOLDS FORMATIONS, INSTRUCTS PLATOON SERGEANTS, ADVISES THE COMMANDER, AND ASSISTS IN TRAINING OF ALL ENLISTED MEMBERS.

THE FIRST SERGEANT MAY SWAGGER AND APPEAR, AT TIMES, SOMEWHAT OF AN EXHIBITIONIST, BUT HE/SHE IS NOT EGOTISTICAL. THE FIRST SERGEANT IS PROUD OF THE UNIT AND, UNDERSTANDABLY, WANTS OTHERS TO BE AWARE OF HIS OR HER UNIT'S SUCCESS.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE TITLE OF ADDRESS FOR THIS GRADE IS NOT SERGEANT, BUT FIRST SERGEANT! THERE IS A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE FIRST SERGEANT AND THE COMMANDER NOT FOUND AT ANOTHER LEVEL WITHIN THE ARMY.

IN THE GERMAN ARMY, THE FIRST SERGEANT IS REFERRED TO AS THE FATHER OF THE COMPANY - AND THAT HE/SHE IS! THE PROVIDER, THE DISCIPLINARIAN, THE WISE COUNSELOR, THE TOUGH AND UNBENDING FOE, THE CONFIDANT, THE SOUNDING BOARD, EVERYTHING THAT WE NEED IN A LEADER DURING OUR PERSONAL SUCCESS OR FAILURE. THE FATHER OF THE COMPANY ...

THE MASTER SERGEANT SERVES AS THE PRINCIPAL NCO IN STAFF ELEMENTS AT BATTALION AND OFTEN HIGHER LEVELS. ALTHOUGH NOT CHARGED WITH THE ENORMOUS LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIRST SERGEANT, THE MASTER SERGEANT IS EXPECTED TO DISPATCH LEADERSHIP AND OTHER DUTIES WITH THE SAME PROFESSIONALISM AND TO ACHIEVE THE SAME RESULTS AS THE FIRST SERGEANT.